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ABSTRACT

This study examines faculty perceptions of how their institutions are governed. Data were drawn from the Carnegie Foundation International Survey of the Academic Profession; the Carnegie Survey gathered demographic data as well as information about the work patterns, career progression, attitudes and values of the professoriate in higher learning institutions in 15 countries. The present research used the data sets of 14 countries, namely Australia, Brazil, Chile, West Germany, South Korea, Hong Kong, Israel, Japan, Mexico, the Netherlands, Russia, Sweden, the United Kingdom, and the United States, for a total sample of 19,509 questionnaires. The authors developed a scale on the continuum "centralized/decentralized" governance of higher education, assigning each national system a score. Russia ranked as the country with the most centralized national governance while the Netherlands presents the decentralized end of the continuum. The costs of communication and of implementation are discussed. Empirical analysis remains incomplete. (Contains 20 references.) (NAV)

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ED 394 435

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GOVERNANCE IN HIGHER EDUCATION: A CROSS-NATIONAL ANALYSIS*

Paper presented at the
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Introduction

Organizational structure and management practices in higher education have been investigated in a variety of studies (e.g. Bourdieu, 1984; Boyer, 1990; Kerr, 1994). However, few have studied the impact of such structures on faculty from the faculty members' own point of view, and even fewer studies have researched such questions across national systems (see Ben-David, 1972 and 1977).

We are well aware of the problems involved in comparative methods of higher education research (see Altbach, 1991). Although titles like "higher education in international perspective" suggest an integral approach, such books are for the most part collections of basically independent chapters on different countries (e.g. Altbach et al., 1989; Mauch and Sabloff (eds.) 1995). Apart from covering a common subject or topic there is little or no direct comparison among national systems. Such collections are comparative in the sense that cross-national perspective is provided, but rarely is any attempt made to present data in comparable format, as good comparative data sets are scarce.

The present study is an exception in this regard since it is using one of the few such sets of data from the comprehensive cross-national study on the academic profession initiated by the Carnegie Foundation (see Boyer, Altbach and Whitelaw, 1994).

During 1991-1993 The Carnegie Foundation for the Advancement of Teaching initiated an International Survey of the Academic Profession. For several decades the Carnegie Foundation has surveyed the US faculty in institutions of Higher Education, publishing the results, financing research, sponsoring commissions, and publishing reports and manifestos. The Survey data used for the present research is from the first International Survey of the academic profession undertaken by a US foundation. The survey focused on the work patterns, career progression, attitudes and values of the professoriate in higher learning institutions in fifteen participating countries, namely Australia, Brazil, Chile, West Germany, Egypt ,South Korea, Hong Kong, Israel, Japan, Mexico, the Netherlands, Russia, Sweden, the U.K. and the U.S. Each country had a director or team who worked directly with the Carnegie Foundation.

The survey resulted in the collection of over 19,000 questionnaires (data was not available from Egypt when the present research was undertaken). Respondents were a sample from each

country's teaching faculty at institutions of higher education that offer the equivalent of a bachelor's or higher degree.

The questionnaire was negotiated between the respective national study directors[1] of the twelve participating countries (Brazil, Chile, West Germany, Egypt, South Korea, Israel, Japan, Mexico, the Netherlands, Russia, Sweden, the U.K. and the U.S.; Australia and Hong Kong joined later) and the Carnegie Foundation. Initially the Carnegie prepared a list of 142 items (3.14.91) on 14 aspects of faculty work life[2] compiled from a number of sources: 1) the Carnegie National Survey of U.S. faculty, 1989; 2) a 1989 survey of university academics in the United Kingdom; and 3) items suggested by the country director(s).

This version was consolidated into four parts and 12 different subheadings, as the first draft of a questionnaire (5.22.91).[3] Conflicting views of what should be included and what excluded were not resolved. One of the methodological questions was what percentage of the questionnaire would have to be the same across all countries in order to keep this a comparative study of the professoriate. The strongest opposition to the draft came from the European countries, who urged dropping questions that were too "US- oriented," and adding items that in their opinion better reflected the local context.[4] The Carnegie did not give up their idea of a scientific instrument, and continued to insist that "asking the same questions will make this study more comparable." The results were that pre-unification West Germany, the Netherlands, and the U.K. questionnaires kept at least 56 percent of the International version intact in their local versions (Gottlieb, 1996).

On June 20, 1994 the highlights of the results were officially released by *Carnegie News*, followed by the publication of a Special Report by Boyer, Altbach and Whitelaw (1994). The Carnegie will also publish later this year a book of national case studies, with a chapter on each country presenting the results and analysis by the director(s) of the Survey. This volume is edited by Philip Altbach (in press), the consultant of the Survey.

The final twelve-page International questionnaire included over two hundred questions covering a variety of topics.[5] In addition to demographic data such as gender, age, degrees, specialization and academic preparation, it included questions on academic career patterns, work

loads and allocation of time, attitudes toward teaching, research, service and governance, and a range of higher education and society issues, as well as international dimensions of academic life.

The data set has not yet been made public; however the directors were supplied with copies of the data from the fourteen countries, so that they could undertake comparative analysis for their case studies (see Chen, Gottlieb, and Yakir, 1993).

The present research used the data sets of fourteen countries namely Australia, Brazil, Chile, West Germany, Hong Kong, Israel, Japan, South Korea, Mexico, the Netherlands, Russia, Sweden, the U.K. and the U.S., for a total sample of 19,509 questionnaires. In addition to background data on, gender, rank, size of institution, and terms of employment, all the questions (34 items) from the section on governance were analyzed and compared.

Governance in Higher Education: A conceptual framework

We follow van Vught (1989) in adopting the view that organizational governance structures can be defined as social constructs in the form of formal and informal rules. These rules are constructed by actors to meet two requirements, the division of labor into tasks and competencies, and the coordination of these tasks and competencies.

A common way of analyzing governance arrangements in higher education is to analyze the range of the division of labor along a continuum between "centralized" and "decentralized." The gulf between faculty and administration and the blend of centralized and decentralized governance in higher education differs dramatically from one country to another. What such patterns of governance look like across national systems, and what faculty members say about the division of labor and the coordination of tasks in their institutions has rarely been researched because of lack of cross-national data. The availability of the data set collected by the Carnegie International Survey of the academic profession enables us for the first time to examine such questions across national systems.

How universities govern themselves remains one of the most complex, confusing, and tension-ridden issues in higher education (see Goedegebuure et al. 1994:315-348). Investigating how

universities and colleges are governed in different national systems could increase our understanding of issues pertaining to the endless tension between academic faculty and administration.

One of the fundamental functions of institutions of higher education is the handling of knowledge. The handling of knowledge is related to organizational characteristics, in so far as these bear on the authority of the academic profession and the diffusion of decision-making power. Which decisions concerning the handling of knowledge are taken by the academic faculty and which by administrative experts?

The questions on governance in the Carnegie questionnaire seek to elicit characterizations of the governance arrangements in institutions of higher learning according to whether they are "centralized", "decentralized" or a blend of both.

"Centralized" in this context, means that key decisions are made by top administrators or a governing board. A centralized institution would correspond to what is referred to as 'top-down' governance. "De-centralized" means that key decisions are made by the faculty of the institution and would correspond to 'bottom-up' systems (Goedegebuure et al. 1994:327). Establishing a continuum from "centralized" to "decentralized" represents an attempt to marshal the chaos which results from the many alternative organizational governance structures in institutions of higher education.

In recent higher education policy studies a concept of "coordination" is used to compare alternative governance systems (on coordination see Thompson et al., 1991). Binsbergen, De Boer and van Vught (1994) compared the governance structures of the Danish and the Dutch systems in terms of their mechanisms of coordination. They characterized coordination mechanisms in terms of a continuum from the "tightest" and most centralizing supervision mechanism namely, *planning* to the "loosest" and least centralizing namely, *mutual adjustment* (p.231).

Institutions in which planning is predominant are usually centrally coordinated and tend to be more bureaucratic in organization -- in the terms of the Carnegie questionnaire, they would lean towards centralization. Institutions in which mutual adjustment is predominant would tend to be more collegial -- in terms of the Carnegie questionnaire, they would lean towards decentralization.

Coordination, by whatever strategy is associated with costs. The coordination costs are of at least two type. The first type of costs are the coordination *cost of communication,* and the second type of costs will be indicated as the coordination *costs of implementation*. In higher education organizations the professional experts play a crucial role in the operating core. Based on the nature of the professionals' specialized, knowledge-intensive tasks they have a preference for mechanisms of coordination that are close to *mutual adjustment* mechanism. Only under pressure will they accept coordination mechanisms that imply the basic mechanism of *planning*. In using mutual adjustment strategies, communication costs are relatively high while implementation costs may be lower. In using planning strategies, the costs of communication may be relatively low, while the costs of implementation are high. (Binsbergen, De Boer and van Vught, 1994:233).

Objective

The objective of this study is to examine faculty perceptions of how their institutions are governed. Specifically we were interested in learning about the decision making structure in the different systems, as well as to develop a scale on the continuum "centralized/decentralized" governance. We undertake to locate the national systems in question by assigning them a 'score' on the continuum of coordination between the "centralized" and "decentralized" poles.

Following this we compare the "cost" of coordination using variables from the Carnegie questionnaire.

Analysis and Results

The section on governance in the Carnegie questionnaire requests respondents to describe the decision making structure in their institutions. A score of "1" on a five-point scale designated very centralized governance while "5" designated very decentralized. Background statistical analysis included country by country analysis of the national data and analysis of the aggregate model.

Table 1 describes the distribution of responses of faculty from 14 countries to seven decision domains designed to elicit their picture of the governance structure in their institutions.

Table 1: Percentage Distribution of Responses on Seven Items Scale: Degree of De-centralization

Item	Centralized				De-centralized
	1	2	3	4	5
Selecting key administrators	63.5	15.4	9.4	4.7	7.0
Choosing new faculty	13.5	11.1	18.6	22.6	34.2
Making promotion and tenure decisions	19.2	18.2	22.0	17.9	22.7
Determining budget priorities	46.8	21.6	13.7	8.3	9.5
Determining the overall teaching load of faculty	19.3	16.6	20.6	19.4	24.0
Setting admission standards for undergraduates	33.8	19.5	17.9	13.4	15.4
Approving new academic programs	24.6	20.9	23.1	15.7	15.7

We note from the table that there is a considerable amount of variation among the items. While 63.5% of the respondents claim that key administrators are selected by top administration, only 13.5% say that choosing new faculty is done by key administrators. 'Selecting key administrators' and 'determining budget priorities' are most 'centralized' while 'choosing new faculty', 'determining overall teaching load', and 'making promotion and tenure decisions' are most 'decentralized.' These latter decisions, involving what Clark (1983), has called the detailed 'knowledge-oriented' academic activities which can only be taken by the academic professional experts themselves. Only faculty are able to oversee their specialized fields.

An index was computed from the seven items in Table 1. This is the composite mean of the seven items: selecting key administrators, determining budget priorities, approving new academic programs, setting admission standards for undergraduate students, determining the overall teaching load of faculty, making faculty promotion and tenure decisions, and choosing new faculty (question 55a-g).

The index (Cronbach's alpha=0.78), though not too good statistically, is never the less usable. An index of decentralization, it yields a scale from 1 to 5. Thus a score higher than 3 means that the institution or national system is characterized by a relatively high level of decentralization, corresponding to coordination by mutual adjustment strategies. A score lower than 3 means that the system is centralized, corresponding to coordination by planning strategies (see Binsbergen, et. al, 1994). The variable thus defined is intended to measure the level of centralization or decentralization in the institution and was labeled De/Central. The overall mean for the entire population (N=19509) was 2.76, which is close to center, leaning slightly toward the 'centralization' pole.

What effects 'decentralization'?

Using the mean of each of the 14 countries on the composite measure of "centralization," De/Central the countries can be grouped at six levels, from most centralized (Russia) to least centralized (the Netherlands). Countries with the higher values represented greater degrees of decentralization in their governance arrangements while those with the lower values represent governance arrangements characterized by greater centralization.

Table 2: Degree of Decentralization by Country

Country	De/C
Russia	2.15
Mexico	2.33
Chile	2.49
USA	2.52
UK	2.56
Korea	2.62
HK	2.69
Brazil	2.77
Sweden	2.93
Australia	2.98
Japan	2.98
Germany	3.15
Israel	3.15
Netherlands	3.61

From Table 2 we note that Russia represents the most centralized of national systems while the Netherlands presents the de-centralized end of the continuum. Mexico, Chile, USA, and UK are relatively centralized while Israel, Germany, Japan, Australia, and Sweden are relatively decentralized in their higher education governance arrangements on the basis of the faculty sample, responding to the Carnegie survey. When the differences between the means were not statistically significant, they were grouped together. Thus, Israel was grouped with W. Germany, Sweden with Australia and Japan, UK, US, Korea and Hong-Kong forming a group with moderate centralization.

What then are the factors which effect the level of decentralization? Using different variables available in the Carnegie questionnaire, we found that gender and institutional size did not contribute to the variance to any serious extent. Since using them in the regression equation forced some countries out (Netherlands and UK), we did not use them in the analysis.

The General Linear Models (GLM) procedure of the SAS package was used to analyze the data. The variables entering into the analysis were: country (14 countries); INSTCOM (institutional commitment, a dichotomous variable: 1=full time tenured; 2=all others); ORIENTATION (i.e. teaching or research, a dichotomous variable: 1=teaching orientation; 2=research orientation); RANK (a dichotomous variable: 1=higher rank; 2=lower rank);

Table 3: An Analysis of Variance of the Composite Measure of De-centralization (De/Central) on Selected Characteristics

Parameter	Estimate	T for H_0: Parameter=0	Pr > |T|
Intercept	2.90	98.18	0.0001
COUNTRY			
Australia	0.053	1.44	0.1513
Brazil	-0.162	-3.85	0.0001
Chile	-0.443	-10.99	0.0001
Germany	0.220	6.18	0.0001
Hong Kong	-0.234	- 4.67	0.0001
Israel	0.223	4.44	0.0001
Japan	0.055	1.39	0.1656
Korea	-0.311	- 7.43	0.0001
Mexico	-0.598	-12.23	0.0001
Netherlands	0.684	18.47	0.0001
Russia	-0.774	-14.74	0.0001
United Kingdom	-0.365	-10.58	0.0001
United States	-0.410	-12.47	0.0001
Sweden	0.000		
INSTCOM			
Full-time tenured	0.039	2.53	0.0115
Other	0.000		
RANK			
Higher	0.096	5.63	0.0001
Lower	0.000		
TR ORIENTATION			
Teaching	-0.076	- 5.29	0.0001
Research	0.000		

Table 3 shows the results of the analysis used in attempting to pinpoint the factors associated with level of de-centralization. The model explains approximately 15% of the variance in the dependent variable De/Central. Most of this variance may be attributed to the variable

COUNTRY (14.7%). The other three variables, though statistically significant account for only about 1% of the variance.

From the above analysis, we may conclude that national higher education governance policies are the most important factor in accounting for variance in decision making procedures. Research oriented, full-time tenured faculty of higher rank seem to populate the decentralized institutions while teaching oriented, part-time and/or untenured faculty of lower rank tend to populate the centralized institutions. However, as already stated, these differences while statistically significant are minuscule.

We move now to another level of our comparative analysis to treat the country differences on coordination 'cost' of the different governance strategies.

We recall that strategies of coordination in institutions may be classified as characterized by a mix of planning and mutual adjustment. Coordination by whatever strategy is associated with costs. In using planning strategies, the costs of communication may be relatively low, while the costs of implementation are high. In using mutual adjustment strategies, communication costs are relatively high while implementation costs may be lower.

Thus we would expect that on one hand systems which are more centralized would have lower communications costs and higher implementation costs. On the other hand, systems which are characterized by de-centralization (collegial, mutual adjustment) would be expected to have higher communications costs but lower implementation costs.

Costs of Communication

In a system where communications costs are high, we can expect that the faculty will spend more of their time in mutual discussions, meetings, committees, etc., because a good part of 'academic' administration and decision making is borne by the academics. Thus we would expect that the proportion of their time spent on administration and service would be relatively high. On the other hand, in a system where communications costs are low (centralized), we can expect the majority of the faculty will spend little time in mutual discussion, committee meetings, interviewing new

prospective faculty, etc. and therefore the proportion of their total worktime spent on administration and service should be relatively low.

The concept 'service' was used in the Carnegie survey but with questionable results since this concept in most other national systems is not understood as it is framed in the US universities. Therefore for the purpose of this analysis we will treat both service and administrative tasks as being supplementary to the main tasks of academics - teaching and research (see Clark, 1987).

One of the questions in the Carnegie survey requested respondents to state the total number of hours they spent in teaching, research, service, and administration when classes are in session. 'TOTAL WORKTIME' was defined as the sum of all the time reportedly spent on these activities.

Table 4 presents the division of total worktime for the whole sample and for selected countries representing the more centralized or de-centralized poles.

Table 4: DIVISION OF TOTAL WORKTIME - Complete Sample

Activity	Mean Percentage
Teaching	46
Research	28
Service	11
Administration	15

Table 4A: DIVISION OF TOTAL WORKTIME - Centralized Governance

Activity	Russia N=416	Mexico N=990	Chile N=1023	US N=3386	UK N=1853
Teaching	63	56	53	53	46
Research	23	24	24	13	27
Service	5	10	9	16	7
Administration	9	10	14	18	21

Table 4B: DIVISION OF TOTAL WORKTIME - De-centralized Governance

Activity	Netherlands N=1268	Germany N=2606	Israel N=502	Japan N=1796	Sweden N=1025
Teaching	40	34	41	41	42
Research	36	42	40	35	33
Service	11	13	8	10	9
Administration	13	11	11	15	16

As can be seen from the above table, faculty members in Russia and Mexico spent relatively little time in Service and Administration (14% and 20%), and this supports the idea that communication costs should be low in centralized systems. However, US and UK are higher than the so-called 'de-centralized' systems, which would seem to indicate that the measure that we have selected needs refinement. It should be noted that all these countries are characterized by spending a large proportion of worktime in teaching and relatively little time in research.

The division of worktime in the 'de-centralized' countries supports the assumption that more time will be spent by the faculty in Service and Administration (24%, 24%, 19%, 25%, 25%). There is also a different division of time between teaching and research, with relatively more time spent on research and relatively less time spent on teaching.

Costs of Implementation

Systems that use planning strategies to a great extent should be expected to have high implementation costs as comparison with system using mutual adjustment strategies which should be expected to have low implementation costs.

As an indicator of implementation costs we will use evaluation. Evaluation, especially external evaluation may be seen as a kind of implementation cost. Academics, like most people, do not usually welcome external evaluation and may see it as unwarranted 'checking up' on their performance. On the other hand, centralized administration and bureaucracies would view evaluation as an instrument of accountability. We would expect that centralized governance would be characterized by a high degree of evaluation, especially in the main work activities, while de-

centralized, mutual adjustment managerial environments should probably be characterized by lower levels of evaluation.

In the Carnegie survey, respondents were requested to specify which of their work activities were regularly evaluated. Table 5 presents the summary of these responses for the whole sample and again by 'centralized' and 'de-centralized' systems.

Table 5 shows the comparison of percent of respondents regularly evaluated in their research activities and in teaching with percent not regularly evaluated in any activity. Part A. shows the whole sample, part B. the countries with high scores on centralization and part C. the countries with high scores on de-centralization.

Table 5A: Regularly Evaluated, All Sample (N=18,798)

Activities regularly evaluated	N=18798
Teaching and Research	38.5%
None	40.9%

Table 5B: Regularly Evaluated - Centralized Governance

Activities regularly evaluated	Russia N=438	Mexico N=1027	Chile N=1071	USA N=3529	UK N=1946
Teaching and Research	25.1	31.4	50.3	66.2	66.7
None	47.5	32.3	30.6	15.4	22.2

Table 5C: Regularly Evaluated - De-Centralized Governance

Activities regularly evaluated	Netherlands N=1364	Germany N=2833	Israel N=502	Japan N=1887	Sweden N=1122
Teaching and Research	33.2	6.2	23.1	11.0	26.3
None	38.4	78.4	46.0	75.4	39.6

Since Russia and Mexico have the lowest scores on decentralization, we would expect them to rate high on evaluation, but they do not. Here Mexico fits the rule, as does Chile USA and UK. Chile, USA, and UK have exceptionally high evaluation percentages as expected. Thus we find only partial support for the assumption that evaluation may be treated as an indicator of implementation costs, and that more centralized systems have higher implementation costs.

The 'decentralized' systems all have relatively low evaluation rates and they are not more than average in the group with no evaluation. Germany and Japan claim especially large percentages of respondents who are not evaluated in any activity.

Concluding Remarks

The crisis in higher education, followed by successive waves of reform during the 1980s, resulted (at least in the literature published during that period) in calls for rethinking the definitions of academic life. Since the basic production processes in universities are knowledge-intensive, the governance structures mostly represent a diffuse decision making power. This is why models of 'coordination' were chosen to analyze the national system on the continuum "centralized" "decentralized."

With such a large data set and so many items available for research, the empirical analysis remains incomplete, and the research still goes on. We cannot yet discuss the full results, but we think that the first empirical explorations offer an interesting prospective for future comparative studies on the dynamic of governance in higher education institutions.

This partial examination of comparative data on governance in higher education systems in fourteen countries has shed some new light on local patterns, enabling us to view them within national frames of reference as well as from international perspectives. Moreover analyses of faculty perceptions of academic work in general, and in particular of faculty characterizations of the governance structure and management practices of the administration, have organizational and policy implications not only for everyday academic life but also for the politics of higher education.

When we report findings from the aggregate model we have to remember that there is likely to be much greater variation within countries than is found to exist between them, because we have chosen to analyze systems that are more similar than different. With these reservations, however, we conclude the findings do show a new set of relationships among variables on governance, and a host of personal and institutional factors. While the data analyzed gave only partial support to the hypotheses connecting coordination strategies and the costs associated with these strategies, we feel that this line of investigation is worth pursuing in future research.

Further research in specific domains of higher education governance is necessary to understand better the findings from the present data and to highlight the impact of organizational structure, management practices and institutional policies on students and faculty in the local context.

Notes

[1] The researchers of this study have been on the Israeli survey team.

[2] List of Topics, International survey of faculty 3.14.91:

1. Individual Characteristics (Demographics)
2. Training and Career Record
3. Principal Activities of Academics
4. Connections among Academics
5. Political, Social, and Economic Perspectives of Academics
6. Institutional Supports and Constraints
7. Teaching and Learning
8. Report of Scholarly Productivity
9. Department Autonomy
10. Feelings about work, Colleagues, and the Institute
11. Rewards of the Academic Profession
12. Perspectives on Professional Development and Career Opportunities
13. Assessment of Faculty Performance
14. Perspectives on Contributions to Society.

[3]. INTERNATIONAL SURVEY OF THE ACADEMIC PROFESSION, Semifinal version:

PART I: WHO ARE THE ACADEMICS?

Individual Characteristics

Training and Experience

Academics' Activities

Professional Affiliation

PART II: ACADEMICS' WORK

Scholarly Productivity

Teaching and Learning

Governance

PART III

THE ACADEMIC CAREER

Rewards and Advancement

Attitudes Towards Work, Colleagues, and the Institution

Career Opportunities

PART IV: PERSPECTIVES ON POLICY

Higher Education in Society

National and International Policy Issues

[4] For example compare the two versions of the following question: The 10.22.91 version --

What is your current employment statue at this institution?

1) Full-time, permanent 2) Full-time, contract 3) Part-time 4) other. In the final version this question has a number of additional options it reads -- What are the characteristics of your current employment... a) working time 1) full-time 2) Part-time. b) Nature of employment 1) Tenured 2) Indefinite contract 3) Contract for fixed period 4) Other contract (please specify).

[5]. List of Topics, International Survey of the Academic profession, 1991-1993

Final 'International Version'

Personal Inventory

Working Conditions

Professional Activity

Teaching

Research

Service

Governance

International Dimensions of Academic Life

Higher Education and Society

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